

SUBSCRIBE



AI

HEALTH

Canada is seeing a mental health 'crisis' but more are willing to discuss it: poll

COVID

Covid case tracker

Vaccination tracker

This ad will end in 16

Canada is marking mental health week and it's no surprise Canadians are struggling as we enter the 15th month of the pandemic. But that struggle may also bring a lasting benefit in how we approach mental health going forward. Morgan Black explains – May 5, 2021

**-A A+**

The number of Canadians experiencing [mental health](#) issues continues to rise across the country amid the [COVID-19](#) pandemic, a new Ipsos poll suggests, with half of those surveyed being deemed at “high risk.”

Yet the poll also found an increasing number of people — 53 per cent — are willing to discuss their issues with family, health professionals or publicly on social media.

That number is a large jump from when Ipsos last polled the public on their experiences with mental health, in April 2018, when only 41 per cent of Canadians said they had discussed their issues.

“It’s really encouraging,” said Jennifer McLeod Macey, vice-president of Ipsos Public Affairs. “We want people to be talking about this. We want to end the stigma.

“But at the same time ... we are in a bit of a crisis mode.”

STORY CONTINUES BELOW ADVERTISEMENT

2:41**Canada seeing a mental health 'crisis,' but more willin...**

Canada seeing a mental health 'crisis,' but more willing to speak about it, poll shows – May 5, 2021

READ MORE: [Simple things Canadians can do to promote their mental health](#)

The number of Canadians at high risk — meaning they've experienced some combination of debilitating stress, hopeless depression and consideration of suicide or self-harm — is at the highest point since Ipsos began its polling in 2015, jumping from 33 per cent to 50 per cent this year.

Nearly one in 10 Canadians seriously considered suicide or self-harm several times over the past year, the poll suggests, while 13 per cent considered it at least once. Both numbers are also up from past polls.

"That may seem like a small number, but it's really not," McLeod Macey said.

"We've got a quarter of people who felt depressed to the point of hopelessness for over two weeks at a time, several times a year. Another 22 per cent who thought that at least once a year. These are true indicators of serious depression."

STORY CONTINUES BELOW ADVERTISEMENT

4:29

Improve your mental health with these steps from a ps...

Improve your mental health with these steps from a psychiatrist – May 4, 2021

Just over half of Canadian women are seeing high risk mental health challenges, the poll suggests, compared to 46 per cent of men. Lower-income Canadians also saw more challenges than other income groups, with 61 per cent of people making less than \$40,000 considered high-risk.

TRENDING STORIES

3rd dose of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine lowers infection risk, Israel study finds

Delta variant weakens protection from Pfizer, AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines: study

The poll found mental health issues are also plaguing a high number of younger Canadians — 76 per cent — compared to 52 per cent of Gen Xers and 31 per cent of baby boomers.

Broken down by region, mental health issues were found most predominantly in Alberta, Ontario and the Atlantic provinces. Alberta saw the highest response with 60 per cent of those polled considered high risk, followed by the Atlantic region at 58 per cent and Ontario at 52 per cent.

The number of Canadians who have taken medications to help them deal with their mental health issues also hit its highest point in the latest poll, reaching 30 per cent of respondents — up from just 18 per cent in 2015.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW ADVERTISEMENT

READ MORE: [COVID-19 pandemic could be a tipping point in ending stigma around mental health care](#)

McLeod Macey noted the highest jump among those who sought an outlet or help for their issues was in the number of people who took to social media. Nearly 20 per cent of those surveyed said they had done so, more than double the number in 2018.

There was a less pronounced increase in how many people spoke to a healthcare provider or mental health professional about their issues, however,

from 21 per cent in 2018 to 30 per cent this year.

“We are still lacking in resources,” she said. “There are still a lot of people out there who need help and can’t find that help in the right capacity for them.”

Aimee Reimer, a registered psychologist at Momentum Walk-In Counselling in Edmonton, said she and her colleagues are seeing a higher and broader number of clients who are more willing to discuss their issues.

She said the COVID-19 pandemic has created a shared environment for people to feel more at ease discussing their issues.

“It does seem like it’s becoming more normalized, where people are talking more about their mental health,” she said. “I think because so many of us are impacted by it, it is a lot easier to respond honestly about what we’re experiencing.”

STORY CONTINUES BELOW ADVERTISEMENT

1:38**COVID-19's impact on mental health**

COVID-19's impact on mental health – Apr 27, 2021

Reimer said a major barrier for those who have yet to seek out help has been cost. Clinics like hers have attempted to address the issue by offering sliding pay scales for low-income clients.

Talking about mental health helps people “realize that they’re not alone, to realize that this is a serious concern,” said Reimer.

“This impacts your relationships, this impacts your work, this impacts your sleep and routines. So I think it can be very helpful to talk about what you’re going through ... and remember that you’re resilient.”

Noting the steady increase in high-risk Canadians over the past six years, McLeod Macey said she expects to see even more people struggling with mental health issues when the pandemic is finally over.

“It’s going to take us a long time to recover from the pandemic, as much as we want to put it behind us,” she said. “It’ll take us years to come out of this.”

STORY CONTINUES BELOW ADVERTISEMENT

She said she hopes that if that number grows, so will the amount of people willing to talk about their issues and seek help.

“We need to keep on it,” she said. “We need to keep talking about it, keep being sensitive and empathetic so that people are willing to open up when they need to with those people they need to open up to.”

2:09

More Canadians opening up about their declining men...

More Canadians opening up about their declining mental health during pandemic – May 5, 2021

— *With files from Morgan Black, Global News*

Canadian cases

CONFIRMED

1,467,718

DEATHS

26,792

AT LEAST ONE DOSE

82.64%

of Canadians aged 12+

FULLY VACCINATED

73.97%

of Canadians aged 12+

Source: Esri Canada

Check out our [Coronavirus Tracker](#) for more details and maps

Last Updated: August 22, 2021, at 11:00:00 am EST

© 2021 Global News, a division of Corus Entertainment Inc.



JOURNALISTIC STANDARDS



REPORT AN ERROR

COVID

Mental Health

Suicide

Depression

+6



SPONSORED STORIES

Vancity Shacket
Free shipping on orders \$40+.
Garage Clothing CA | Sponsored

Solid Rib Black Cropped Tank Top - Lulus
\$28 -
LULUS | Sponsored

Square Neck Cut-Out Cami
Free shipping on orders \$40+.
Dynamite Clothing CA | Sponsored

Sponsored 1/5

Settle Down Ivory Long Sleeve Collared Pullover Sweatshirt - Lulus

Read More >

